

Students in Public exemplar details

Faculty, School and Subject Area: Humanities, SALC, R&T

Course Unit/activity: RELT21221 Storytelling in Indian Traditions

Course Unit Director/activity leader: Jacqueline Suthren Hirst

What is the assignment/knowledge product?

Creative presentation of an Indian narrative. Students may choose to do this in a public setting, e.g. one group taught part of the Ramkatha to Year 7 pupils, in both their RE and their Drama classes.

Product: R&T students produced a media presentation with introduction and conclusion in person to their peers. School product: pupils produced their own mini-presentations and poetry.

Why was it introduced?

As an appropriate way of assessing a unit on storytelling (one of three components). Outward facing: as an option for students who wanted to engage with a storytelling or other community.

Where is/could it be published/publicly performed?

The student presentation with pupil poems could have been published on a website with appropriate permissions. However, this was not done at the time so would not be possible in retrospect.

What are the challenges (e.g. copyright)?

Permissions in the case of working with school students. Ethical issues about publishing sensitive material that showed pupils' own responses.

What are the student perceptions/responses/attainment?

In this particular case, the students gained a First class mark on this component. More importantly, one of the group who had DSO permission not to do presentations was enabled through this format to take ownership of the process, to make the contact with the school and to achieve something she never thought would be possible. This had the effect of increasing her confidence in other areas of her work too. It also enabled another member of the group to discover her teaching talents.

In general, on the creative presentations, the majority of students each year appraise this part of the unit in particular very highly in terms of the opportunity to do something different, to work in teams that really do work and to get to know people well as a result. Inevitably, there are sometimes dysfunctional groups for a variety of reasons and the assessment is set up to deal with this so no student is disadvantaged in terms of marks.

If published, how do you monitor use of the resource/s?

N/A

Any other comments

In an ideal world, all the student groups would engage with an outward-facing context for this part of the assessment. Schools however are very overused in our area, and the curriculum means that students are limited in what narratives are seen as viable by RE staff. To work with community groups to present at community events for example would require a longer amount of time than the current assessment is allocated. There is a possibility of working with the new South Asia gallery in Manchester Museum for groups presenting in that context which is exciting. JSH and JZ are in touch with the Museum and an involved local teacher in this context, but it will be a medium to longer term plan.

Storytelling in Indian Traditions

Unit code : RELT21221

Credit rating : 20

Aims

1. To introduce you to the wonderfully varied forms of storytelling in Indian religious traditions, and the ways in which they relate to different ethical, devotional, social and political contexts
2. To analyse oral, written and visual forms of story-telling texts
3. To develop skills in:
reading, hearing, analysing and reworking primary sources;
working in groups and setting goals;
making creative presentations, drawing on web-based materials where appropriate.

Objectives (Learning outcomes)

By the end of the unit you will:

- Understand ways in which stories are told and retold both within and across Indian religious traditions
- Analyse ways in which narratives are used to explore ethical and social issues in Indian traditions
- Critically employ a range of hard copy and online resources including those produced by and for Indian groups
- Undertake self and peer review (formative only)
- Show an ability to work in a group, to formulate a problem, devise a solution, using a creative medium and tackle issues which arise from this.
- Make an oral presentation to peers
- Organise their own time and priorities

Assessment methods

Assessment task	Length	Weighting within unit
Formative: Essay	2000 words max	None
Summative: • Group presentation • Individual essay linked with presentation • Exam	Equivalent to 1500 words 2000 words max. 2 hours	20% 30% 50%

Course unit overview

Visit India, and religious stories are everywhere: on hoardings, in the cinema, in comic books, street theatre, village story-telling, temple walls, mosque schools, election campaigning, TV and the internet. A 'single' story such as the story of Rama (Ramkatha) can have thousands of different tellings: in different regions and languages; by different caste groups or political parties; within and across different religious traditions. So studying Indian storytelling gives us an insight into the heart of Indian religion and culture, ethics and social forms, many of which remain influential in the South Asian diaspora worldwide.

It is therefore a key course to take if you are considering teaching. It will introduce you to new ways of thinking about philosophical and ethical issues and their social location if you do TPE. It also helps you think critically about the ways in which we construct separate –isms (Hinduism, Jainism, Islam) and understand 'religion'.